IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) In an online messaging system supporting transmission of attachments, a method for automatically processing e-mail messages containing attachments, the method comprising:

specifying a preference for formatting attachments that accompany e-mail messages;

receiving a particular e-mail message having a particular attachment;

detecting capabilities of an intended recipient's receiving device, wherein the detecting is performed dynamically, during a request from the intended recipient to retrieve the particular e-mail message;

responsive to detecting the intended recipient's receiving device and responsive to identifying the particular attachment as exceeding capabilities of the intended recipient's receiving device, removing the particular attachment from the particular message and inserting a link into the particular e-mail message, said link capable of referencing the particular attachment that has been removed;

delivering the particular e-mail message to the intended recipient; and

in response to invocation of the link by the intended recipient, retrieving a copy of the particular attachment that is automatically formatted based on the specified preference.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the preference is associated with a particular user.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the preference is associated with a particular device of a user.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said online messaging system comprises an e-mail messaging system.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said attachment includes media objects.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said media objects comprise selected ones of audio content, video content, images, and documents.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said preference includes specifying that attachments which comprise images be formatted to a particular resolution.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said preference includes specifying that attachments which comprise images be transformed from one file format to another.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said step of receiving a particular e-mail message includes:

    receiving the particular e-mail message at an SMTP server.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein said step of removing the particular attachment occurs at said SMTP server.

11. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein said step of removing the particular attachment occurs after processing by the SMTP server.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said particular e-mail message includes a MIME attachment.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein said MIME attachment includes media objects.

14. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein said MIME attachment includes digital images.

15. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said link comprises a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) referencing said attachment that has been removed.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the copy of the particular attachment is automatically formatted when a request is received to retrieve the particular attachment.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the copy of the particular attachment is automatically formatted when the particular attachment is removed from the particular e-mail message.

18. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein copies of attachments that are removed are stored in a network repository.

19. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said formatting includes converting objects within an attachment from one format to another type of format.

20. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said formatting includes decreasing the size of objects within an attachment.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein said decreasing the size of objects includes transforming the objects to a lower resolution.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein said decreasing the size of objects includes transforming the objects from color to monochromatic.

23. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein formatted copies of objects within the particular attachment are stored in a network repository.

24. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein said network repository is accessible by a Web browser for shared access among multiple participants.

25. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said particular attachment includes JPEG-formatted digital images.

26. (Currently Amended) In an online system, a method for providing digital images to target devices, the method comprising:

receiving [[a]] an e-mail message having one or more attached objects;

detecting capabilities of an intended recipient's receiving device, wherein the detecting is performed dynamically, during a request from the intended recipient to retrieve the e-mail message;

responsive to detecting the intended recipient's receiving device and responsive to identifying the objects as exceeding capabilities of the intended recipient's receiving device, detaching said objects from said message and automatically transforming copies of said objects to a resolution fidelity that is more useful to said target devices;

for each detached object, generating a reference allowing retrieval of a transformed copy of the detached object; and

delivering the e-mail message to the target devices, the e-mail message including said generated reference for each detached object.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein said transforming step includes converting copies of said objects to another type of format.

28. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein said transforming step includes decreasing the size of the copies of said objects.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein the step of decreasing the size of said objects includes transforming the objects to a lower fidelity.

30. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein transformed copies of said objects are stored in a network repository.

31. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein said objects comprise digital images.

32. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein said digital images are stored in JPEG format.

33. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein said reference includes a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for referencing a transformed copy of a detached object.

34-45. (Canceled)

46. (Previously Presented) An e-mail system for providing e-mail having attachments, the system comprising:

an e-mail server for:

receiving a particular e-mail message having an attachment, the particular e-mail message being addressed to a recipient having a target device capable of receiving e-mail, the attachment including one or more objects, and

detecting capabilities of the target device, wherein the detecting is performed dynamically, during a request from the recipient to retrieve the e-mail message;

an attachment processing module for replacing the attachment with at least one reference responsive to detecting the target device and responsive to identifying the attachment as exceeding capabilities of the target device;

a transformation module for transforming the objects of the attachment to a desired format, based on capabilities of the target device; and

a retrieval module allowing retrieval of the transformed objects, in response to invocation of at least one reference.

47. (Original) The system of claim 46, wherein the attachment of the particular e-mail message comprises a MIME attachment.

48. (Original) The system of claim 47, wherein the MIME attachment includes one or more digital images.

49. (Original) The system of claim 46, wherein said e-mail server comprises an SMTP server.

50. (Original) The system of claim 46, wherein said attachment processing module operates as a plug-in module to said e-mail server.

51. (Currently Amended) In an online messaging system supporting transmission of attachments, a method for automatically processing e-mail messages containing attachments, the method comprising:

specifying a preference for formatting attachments that accompany e-mail messages;

receiving a particular e-mail message having a particular attachment;

detecting capabilities of an intended recipient's receiving device, wherein the detecting is performed dynamically, during a request from the intended recipient to retrieve the particular e-mail message;

responsive to detecting the intended recipient's receiving device and responsive to identifying the particular attachment as exceeding capabilities of the intended recipient's receiving device, removing the particular attachment from the particular e-mail message and inserting a copy of the particular attachment that is automatically formatted based on the specified preference; and

delivering the particular e-mail message to an intended recipient.